

OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER

AO/ECVL/MILA/GUIDANCE-YOUTH-EDUCATION-TO-
WORK-TRANSITIONS/013/08

“Guidance and youth education-to-work transitions”

Tenderer
PLAN

Technical Proposal

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Overview

The context of labour market is characterized by an increasing demand for skills and qualifications because of the continuing importance of services, technologies and organizational changes.

In this situation young people with a low level of education are clearly disadvantaged.

As a recent discussion paper¹ has demonstrated:

- the rate of non employment is decreasing with educational qualifications;
- the school leavers (particularly in southern part of Europe) take long time to find a first job, especially a permanent job;
- the youth labor market is characterized by relevant turnover among employment, unemployment, inactivity and this situation (the difficulty to run away from this “circle”) is more accentuated in young people with low educational attainment.

In this framework is clear that the aims of all strategies and policies are addressed to combat the school failures.

The traditional successful experiences in European countries (in facing the problems mentioned) are mainly based on the dual-type system and apprenticeship. Unfortunately these models aren't so easily “duplicable” in other countries except the Middle-Europe².

Many experiences has focused the attention to a mix of interventions based both on the activation of supports programs to the enterprises and support to young people like search-job assistance, career guidance, self-empowerment.

These interventions appear really strategic considering that the situation in the 27 EU members is far from the benchmarks fixed in the Lisbon objectives in education and training³.

In general the main needs are:

- to enhance young people's active participation in education, employment and society;
- to improve young people's access to information services;
- to support young people in the transition between education, training and work identifying individual paths and to promote individual support measures;

1 Quintini G., Martin J.P, Martin S. (2007 – Institute for the Study of Labour): The changing nature of the school-to-work transition process in OECD countries.

2 Also in these countries (especially in Germany) some problems are emerging in applying the original model.

3 As the Cedefop tender remarks, in 2006, the share of early school leavers in the EU 25 was of 14,9% and the upper completion rate for 20-24 year olds is 77,3%. In comparison of the benchmarks (10% for early school leavers and 85% for upper secondary completion) the distance is relevant.

- to integrate different strategies in order to increase, in these disadvantaged young people, their control over their own life;
- to implement coherent strategies at local and regional level including all relevant stakeholders, social partners, young people and their families.

Regarding the strategies connected to guidance supports, OECD⁴ has identified six key-points in activating and developing guidance services:

- to ensure that resources allocation decisions give the first priority to systems that develop career self-management skills and career information;
- to guarantee an high level of diversity in the types of services available and in the ways that they are delivered;
- to build a real integrated team in which the role of career guidance practitioners assume a central relevance;
- to improve a detailed information system able to be used by different services;
- to develop efficient mechanism of quality assurance;
- to develop stronger structures for strategic leadership.

Other suggestions (strategic and operational) are obtained managing a recent Equal Project⁵ in which a consisting study of benchmarking⁶ has focused, as success points in education-to-work transitions:

- to plan individualized paths for each person;
- to identify not only objectives regarding the development of competences but the personal approach and the individual strategies to face the daily life;
- to consider the whole system of relations (family, friends, places etc.) in which the young person is situated.
- to identify strength actions of socio-pedagogical tutorship and mentoring.

The key-points emerged and addressed to policy-makers and stakeholders:

- to build or to reinforce a very efficient network among the different institutions that, at local level, are involved in contrasting problems of the Youth (schools, social services, employment services, local governments etc.);
- to build or to reinforce the cooperation among these institutions, Social Parts (companies, professional categories, trade unions etc.) and other associations.

4 OECD (2004): Career guidance and public policy - Bridging the gap.

5 ET - Esperienze di Transizione - Transition Experiences (2005-2008) in which Plan was managing organization. The general aim of intervention has been to plan transition forms aiming to the disadvantaged youth and teenage sector through a network of services, in order to develop possible occupational perspectives. The main page of the project (in English) is <http://www.equal-et.net/english.php>.

6 This study has analyzed 25 cases (14 in Italy and 11 in others European countries). The report is only available in Italian at the web page: <http://www.equal-et.net/docs.php>.

These considerations are very important “pillars” useful to improve the practical knowledge in education-to-work and in guidance support.

It's fundamental that, at European level, the strategies and the policies addressed to reduce social exclusion of youth follow common visions, perspectives and operational approaches.

In this general situation, the Call for tenders of Cedefop is extremely coherent with the designation, by the European Commission, of 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and it's a real opportunity to deepen the indications given by the studies mentioned.

The technical proposal submitted by Plan follows the indications given by Cedefop.

This document is divided in seven parts:

- Aims and specific objectives;
- Tasks;
- Products / Outcomes;
- Methodology and tools;
- Timetable;
- Resources;
- Gantt Diagram.

1. Aims and specific objectives

Consequently to the preliminary considerations, the proposed project is aimed to give a contribute in:

- identifying and exploring practices in education to work transitions of young people at risk of leaving education and/or having a less education rate;
- mapping potential areas of further development;
- suggesting guidelines to the policy makers and guidance practitioners for future actions.

It's possible to consider as specific objectives of the project (relating to the aim "identifying and exploring practices in education to work transitions") to enhance knowledge and to put in evidence best practices in:

- identifying clearly the adequate goals for a transition project related to a specific target group;
- producing coherently tools and support interventions in order to designate the needs of specific target group;
- motivating young people (and their personal contexts) in changing the negative approach;
- building a network (institutions, enterprises, social parts, associations) capable to help young people in a systemic way.

After the identification of these best practices, it's possible to identify some areas of guidance needing further improvement. In specific the objectives will be:

- identifying the more critical areas in guidance;
- identifying the future actions for further improvements.

The objectives related with the aim "suggesting guidelines ..." can be described as:

- elaborating proposals for policy makers and decision makers useful to elaborate adequate policies and strategies concerning education-to-work transition;
- elaborating operational suggestions for the operators of guidance services (social services, employment services) able to face the projects of transition and the relation with young people, promoting a systemic point of view to the problems.

2. Tasks

Resuming the tasks identified in Cedefop “Open invitation to tender”, the main tasks of this suggested proposal are:

1. Identifying and exploring promising practices in education-to-work transitions of young people at the risk of dropping out of mainstream and training.
2. Mapping out potential areas of further development in guidance policies and guidance service provision as regards young people's education-to-work transitions.
3. Providing policy-makers, decision-makers and guidance practitioners with recommendations and key message for future action.

Regarding the point 1, the expected study report⁷ will be oriented to analyze⁸ and to put in evidence:

- the methodologies, the tools and the roles necessary in the previous phase of identification young people with problems;
- the methodologies, the tools and the roles necessary in planning (or to identify existing activities or to integrate existing services with new actions) activities coherently with the problems;
- the methodologies, the tools and the roles necessary in producing an individualized path (within the identified activities);
- the support actions able to favor the realization of the individual path;
- the competences and the roles (and the cooperation strategies among the roles) involved in support actions.

7 Composed of 50-60 pages and analyzing 20-25 case studies in 10-12 countries (older and newer members). This phase will follow a preliminary desk research regarding bibliography identified by Cedefop in pages 12 and 13 of the “Open invitation to tender” and other useful documents.

8 Divided in the three sub-themes proposed by Cedefop:

- a. to integrate early school leavers into mainstream education and training and to offer them a more specialized and tailor-made training provision outside of/parallel to mainstream education
- b. to identify potential early school leavers and to provide them with prevention programmes that contain systematic, comprehensive and even experientially based interventions to alter negative developmental trajectories and to prevent further complications for the young persona at risk
- c. to facilitate education-to-work transitions for young people at the risk of dropping out through individualized working life familiarization programs.

Regarding the point 2, the expected research report⁹ will be oriented to analyze and to put in evidence especially the strength and the weakness points in order to identify¹⁰:

- the success factors (divided in the three sub-themes proposed by Cedefop);
- the further challenges for the policies, strategies and services;
- the elements that the case studies consider critical;
- the possible strategies able to enhance the relevance of these elements;
- the methodologies, the tools and the competences necessary to support the strategies.

Regarding the point 3, the expected result¹¹ will be oriented to analyze and to put in evidence:

- For the policy-makers and the decision-makers:
 - the strategies oriented to build an integrated network of services (bringing out the existing services);
 - the strategies able to reinforce the real cooperation among the network;
 - the operational conditions that favor an effectiveness and efficiency communication system;
 - the possible promotion of organizational roles more oriented to face the whole problems of young people (case managers and similar).
- For the guidance practitioners:
 - the methodological approaches to adopt in giving services to disadvantaged young people;
 - the operational tools useful to face disadvantaged young people and their problems;
 - the “errors to avoid”;
 - the knowledge, the competences and the skills to reinforce.

9 The research report (20 pages analysis) will present the guidance and counseling measures that support the education-to-work transition of young people at the risk of dropping out of mainstream education and training.

10 On the basis of desk research and the analysis of case studies will be identified 3-5 areas of guidance (relating to young people's education-to-work transitions) that require further improvement and more attention in the future.

11 As Cedefop tender suggests, the results of this task will consist in a 5-10 key messages addressed to policy-makers and decision-makers and in 5-10 key messages addressed to guidance practitioners.

3. Products / Outcomes

Coherently with the Cedefop tender, the products will be:

- An inception report. The “core” of this report will be the draft for the description of the case studies. At the moment it's difficult to identify a definitive scheme but it's possible to underline that the grid useful to analyze the cases will be composed by the following fields:
 - the target group;
 - the objectives and the specific goals;
 - the general characteristics of the experiences;
 - the methodological approaches;
 - the operational characteristics of the experiences;
 - the professional roles involved;
 - the network achieved;
 - the system of monitoring and evaluation.
- An interim report including:
 - a preliminary analysis;
 - a list of potential case studies;
 - a minimum of at least 7 completed case studies;
 - a short description of the methodology (with the final version of the tools for data collection and analysis);
 - a list of data sources;
 - an update of the work plan and timetable;
 - other information.
- A draft final report (study) including:
 - a compilation of 20-25 case studies (see point 1 of the tasks);
 - the 20 pages study on the contributions of guidance to supporting school completion and education-to-work transitions of young people at the risk of dropping out of mainstream education and training (see point 2 of the tasks);
 - an executive summary presenting the main findings and highlighting key policy considerations for the future (see point three of the tasks);
 - annexes (bibliography etc.) and a full description of the methodology.
- A final report (study) including the same elements of the draft final report.

4. Methodology and tools

4.1 Summary of the methodological approach and tools

Regarding the realization of the 20-25 case studies (divided in the three sub themes proposed by Cedefop), the first step is to identify interesting experiences.

The two main contributions will be a desk research and a short “checklist” to select the cases.

The desk research useful as preliminary orientation about the themes of the project will be conducted using:

- The recent EU policy documents, reports, studies etc. and the existing literature. The starting point will be the documentation offered by Cedefop.
- The network achieved by Plan during several experiences in projects regarding young people (especially with problems or at risk of social exclusion) and their qualification. This network permits an activation (as data sources) of structures (Universities, Employment and Social Services, Training Centers, Enterprises Associations, Trade Unions) operating in: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Spain. In the course of this cooperation it has been possible to visit and to know significant experiences in the field of this “Call for Tenders”.

The “checklist”, only as example, will be able to identify the follow:

- the main results (quantitative, qualitative);
- the relevance of the experience by the innovation (as a new service achieved or a new approach or a new tools);
- the political relevance (because of institutions - central or local - has strongly recommend the achieving of the services, for instance participating in partnership);
- the organizational relevance (adoption of new roles, procedures etc.).

This checklist will be used without other tools but, in not clearly cases, could be integrated by a phone call to the responsible of the case potentially object of study.

As shortly explained in “4. Products/Outcomes” the case studies will be compared using a grid able to identify the following aspects:

- the target group;
- the objectives and the specific goals;
- the general characteristics of the experiences;
- the methodological approaches;
- the operational characteristics of the experiences;
- the professional roles involved;
- the network achieved;

- the elements of distinction;
- the critical aspects;
- the system of monitoring and evaluation.

These information will be collected in three main ways:

- analysis of documentation (using especially web sites);
- analysis of a questionnaire that will be sent by mail to a relevant number of responsible persons/operators involved in the cases¹²;
- eventual phone calls addressed to responsible persons/operators involved if the information collected with the previous tool will need further information.

Regarding the realization of 20 pages study, the methodology will be as follows:

- analysis of the main points emerging by the desk research¹³ addressed to point out the main key-aspects related to the further strategies and policies in supporting the education-to-work transition of young people at risk;
- this analysis will be achieved using a “filter-grid” able to identify two big categories related with the issues of the project:
 - the context situation (labor market, education situation, social factors related to young people)
 - the most important aims (and strategies) fixed and suggested to the institutions in facing the problem of social exclusion.
- analysis of the case studies oriented to put in evidence (eventually using an appropriate methodological grid):
 - the success factors
 - the further challenges
 - the critical elements and the strategies to face this elements
 - the methodologies, tools and competences required.
- submission (using e-mail) of a short questionnaire addressed to some persons responsible / operators of services or institutions or social parts etc. in order to deepen the information.

Regarding the realization of key messages (addressed to policy-makers and decision-makers and to guidance practitioners), the methodology will be as follows:

- using all the documents produced for the other parts (with the help of an appropriate methodological grid) with the aim to realize (for the policy-makers and the decision-makers) 5-10 key messages able to suggest:
 - the strategies oriented to build and to reinforce a network of services (conditions for integration, real cooperation, sharing of

¹²This questionnaire will contain some short questions useful to understand deepen that the documentation doesn't explain clearly. In this way the questionnaire will be personalized on the basis of the research needs.

¹³See the proposed documents by Cedefop in this Call for tenders and the operational suggestions of integration.

- information)
 - the organizational conditions that favor the network.
- using all the documents produced for the other parts (with the help of an appropriate methodological grid) with the aim to realize (for the guidance practitioners) 5-10 key messages able to suggest:
 - the methodological approaches and the operational tools useful to adopt in giving services.
 - the “errors to avoid” and the knowledge, competences and skills to reinforce.
- this analysis could be enriched of a submission (using e-mail) of a short questionnaire addressed to some persons responsible / operators of services in order to deepen the information.

4.2 Potential data sources

The list of potential data sources could be:

- documents and websites of Schools in which are activated programs to face the problem of school leavers;
- documents and websites of Governments (Nationals and Locals) related to the policies of work, education and training;
- documents and websites of Institutions and Services (Nationals and Locals) related with guidance support and employment services;
- documents and websites of organizations that has studied the phenomenon of Youth disadvantage (International Labour Office etc.);
- documents and websites of projects addressed to young people (at Local level, at National level, at European level) related with the problem of social exclusion.

In particular it's important to remind the network mentioned in 4.1.

As key reference institutions could be contacted persons responsible and/or operators of:

- Schools and Training Centers;
- Local or National Governments;
- Institutions and Services that offer guidance support and/or employment services;
- Organizations with experiences in the study of Youth social exclusion phenomenon;
- Projects at Local, National or European level.

4.3 Probable challenges

The major challenge will be related with mapping out common potential further areas of development and to identify common key messages because of:

- the differences in the situations¹⁴;
- the differences in experiences of policies, guidance strategies etc. among the countries;
- the differences in cultural approaches related with the issues of education and the relation between education and work.

In this case the solution could be to produce a common framework (coherent with the indications of Cedefop) and, where necessary, to specify some detailed notes able to clarify eventual different suggestions.

Another challenge could be the difficulty to understand the real practices achieved in the case-studies.

In these cases appear useful to implement a supplementary approach of data collecting as explained in 4.1.

¹⁴ Even if the problems are similar for instance the situation related with the difficulties to find a job for the young people in the South Europe is more relevant than in the Middle-North.

5. Timetable

Coherently the Cedefop Call for Tenders, the phases reported in the timetable start at the day of the signature of the contract.

Phase 0 - General Management

Objectives

- to manage the whole project (administrative and operational aspects) both with Cedefop and with internal staff
- to guarantee the respect of the time
- to purpose eventual changes
- to suggest to Cedefop some guidelines in order the organization of a final event

Products

- formal and administrative documentations

Meetings

- kick-off meeting (a few week after the signature of the contract)
- an interim meeting (within five months after the signature of the contract)
- a concluding meeting (within eight months after the signature of the contract)

Duration

- all the duration of the project (10 months)

Phase 1 - Production of an interim report

Objectives

- to realize a preliminary analysis
- to identify the case studies
- to define the methodology and the definitive tools

Products

- a preliminary analysis
- a list of potential case studies
- at least 7 complete case studies
- a list of data sources

Meetings

- an interim meeting (the same of the phase 0)

Durations

- five months starting from the signature of the contract

Phase 2 – Production of a draft final report

Objectives

- to elaborate a 20-25 case studies
- to produce a study to support the further areas of development in supporting school completions and education-to-work transitions of young disadvantaged people
- to suggest to policy-makers, decision-makers and guidance practitioners key messages in developing strategies and services

Products

- 20-25 case studies (draft)
- 20 pages study (draft)
- key messages document (draft)
- annexes (bibliography etc.) (draft)

Meetings

- a concluding meeting (the same of the phase 0)

Durations

- three months (starting from the end of the phase 1 within eight months of the date of the signature of the contract)

Phase 3 – Production of a final report

Objectives

- to elaborate a 20-25 case studies
- to produce a study to support the further areas of development in supporting school completions and education-to-work transitions of young disadvantaged people
- to suggest to policy-makers, decision-makers and guidance practitioners key messages in developing strategies and services

Products

- 20-25 case studies
- 20 pages study
- key messages document
- annexes (bibliography etc.)

Meetings

- none

Durations

- two months (starting from the end of the phase 2 within ten months of the date of the signature of the contract)

6. Team members

In order to achieve the activities previous identified, in this part of project will be illustrated the professional resources necessary for each phase of the project.

Phase 0

- One project leader with an high level of experience in managing project at European level.
- A Scientific Committee (composed by two University professors with a wide experiences in the issues of youth education and education-to-work-transition) in order to guarantee the scientific quality of the whole project.

Phase 1

- One responsible of the research (with an high level of experience in methodology of research and in the issues of this research) able to identify the operational strategies and to coordinate the activities of the phase.
- One senior researcher (with an high level of experience in methodology of research and in the issues of this research) engaged in the operational activities of the research and in the analysis of the case studies.

Phase 2

- One responsible of the research (with an high level of experience in methodology of research and in the issues of this research) able to identify the operational strategies and to coordinate the activities of the phase.
- One senior expert (with experience in methodology of research and in the issues of policy at Local, National and European level related to the issues of this research) engaged in the operational activities and in the production of areas of guidance and key-messages.

Phase 3

- One responsible of the research (with an high level of experience in methodology of research and in the issues of this research) able to identify the operational strategies and to coordinate the activities of the phase.
- One senior expert (with experience in methodology of research and in the issues of policy at Local, National and European level related to the issues of this research) engaged in the operational activities and in the production of areas of guidance and key-messages.

7. Gantt Diagram

PHASE	RESOURCES	TIME									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0 – General management	- 1 Project Leader - 1 Scientific Committee		M1			M2			M3		
1 – Production of an interim report	- 1 Research Responsible - 1 Senior Researcher					M2 P1 P2 P3 P4					
2 – Production of a draft final report	- 1 Research Responsible - 1 Senior Expert								M3 P5 P6 P7 P8		
3 – Production of a final report	- 1 Research Responsible - 1 Senior Expert										P9 P10 P11 P12

Meetings --> M1 = kick-off meeting, M2 = interim meeting, M3 = concluding meeting

Products¹⁵ --> P1 = preliminary analysis, P2 = list of potential cases, P3 = 7 (or more) case studies, P4 = list of data sources, P5 = 20-25 case studies (draft), P6 = 20 pages case study (draft), P7 = key messages document (draft), P8 = annexes (draft), P9 = 20-25 case studies, P10 = 20 pages case study, P11 = key messages document, P12 = annexes.

¹⁵ For the Phase 0, the products will be formal and administrative documents.